

THE ATTITUDE OF VARIOUS PARTIES TOWARD THE ACTIVITIES OF CITY DUMAS IN TURKESTAN

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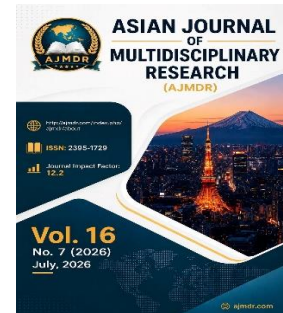
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Abstract The article covers the emergence of political parties in the Turkestan region, as well as the emergence and activities of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, the attitude of parties toward elections for self-governing institutions-city dumas, and their activities and participation in the preparation for elections.

Keywords: Turkestan Committee, Socialist Revolutionaries, party committee, local government, Skobelev city, propaganda and agitation, election, polling station, City Duma, chairman, city administration, mayor, duma meetings, civic school, congress of cities, city economy, food committee, constituent assembly.

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, a number of political and educational societies emerged in the Turkestan region. Political societies and political parties established in the central cities of the Russian Empire also formed their branches in the remote regions of the empire, including the Turkestan region. The February Revolution of 1917 and the overthrow of the monarchical regime gave a great impetus to the activation of political parties. The reforms in the field of local government, which began to be implemented by the Provisional Government, were always at the center of attention of political parties.

In April–May 1917, preparations for elections to city self-governing institutions-city dumas-based on the decisions of the Turkestan Committee of the Provisional Government, intensified in the cities of Turkestan. Preparing for and participating in the elections to the city dumas were at the center of attention of all political parties operating in the Turkestan region. The committees of various parties

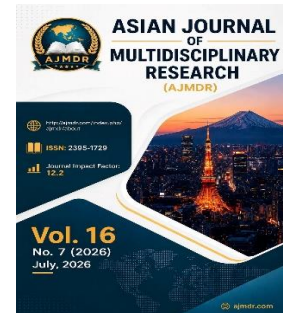


approached the preparations for the elections with great enthusiasm and high spirits. In the process of preparing for the elections, various parties paid special attention to preparing and distributing appeals and propaganda leaflets to the city's population, devising means to better influence the voter, and conducting pre-election gatherings and demonstrations. Each party in the Turkestan region drew up a list of its candidates to participate in the city дума elections and developed its own programs on the activities of city self-governing institutions.

The first regional congress of the Socialist Revolutionary Party in Tashkent was held in May 1917. The issue of city думas, which were expected to occupy an important and primary place in the life of the state and society, was discussed at the party congress as the most urgent issue. Party leaders and members believed that city думas would henceforth be the main link of local government institutions and would strengthen the position of the Russian people in society and state administration.

A special resolution on the issue of city думas was adopted at the congress of the Socialist Revolutionary Party. The resolution emphasized that in order to participate actively in the activities of city self-governing institutions, it is necessary to send party branches and members to the elections held for city думas. To implement these goals, they believed it was necessary to pay attention to the following issues:

1. Establishing a civic school that spends its energy and knowledge for the benefit of broad sections of citizens and fully supports all city citizens in city self-governing institutions;
2. Establishing new institutions that organize and unite city citizens, with the goal of improving all aspects of the lives of the city's population;



3. Creating opportunities for city youth to develop their strength and abilities and to strengthen the democratic principles of society;

The participants of the congress recommended that their organizations require the following from city self-governing institutions to implement the above goals and tasks:

1. Preparing for and studying the socialization of land in cities to carry out urban land reforms successfully, without problems (without disputes and conflicts);
2. Establishing regional dumas as much as possible;
3. Fighting against the artificial rise in prices for various services, housing, and food products in cities. The right to review the prices offered by landlords and shop owners, and in general the issues of prices in cities, and to set prices should be given to city dumas. Also, a graded income tax based on their total value must be introduced for the trade of jewelry, for the service of carriages (horse-drawn carriages providing transport services to the population - *Yo.B*), and for rented housing and apartments. That is, it is necessary to set graded, i.e., high, medium, and low prices, depending on the conditions created and the types and quality of services provided;
4. It is appropriate to introduce the above-mentioned graded tax system when setting taxes for trade institutions. That is, separate income-based taxes should be introduced for trade institutions that provide a wide range of trade services and have a large trade turnover, and for trade institutions that provide limited types of trade services and have an average trade turnover;
5. Establishing new institutions that improve the standard of living of the city's population, make the lives of the people cheaper, and satisfy the needs of broad strata of the population, and consolidating their activities in the hands of the city дума;

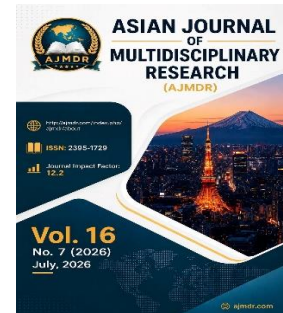


6. To develop productive forces in cities, organizing credit for the city's population, creating production associations, organizing the activities of supervisors (instructors), introducing technical education, and organizing training courses and lectures that increase the educational level of the population;

7. Establishing labor exchanges, creating all levels of the education system. Each child should be provided with school supplies, clothing, and food by city administrative institutions until they reach the age of 15 and have the opportunity to receive an education at school. It is also necessary to develop extracurricular education processes, open libraries, organize reading rooms, give lectures, establish enlightenment societies, organize excursions to museums, and carry out other activities;

8. Organizing an exemplary 8-hour working day for employees and workers living and working in cities, creating conditions for inventions that provide production with modern technology and make labor easier, providing a certain percentage of the income received by enterprises to workers and employees as bonuses, building new workers' towns with all conditions for workers, opening kindergartens and nurseries for the children of workers and employees, launching a pension system that improves the material life of workers and employees, establishing aid and loan funds, and creating construction societies that build cheap housing;

9. Implementing work that improves city life, turning cities into gardens, developing building regulations for construction works in cities, and creating public medicine and a sanitation system, establishing institutions to monitor their activities, establishing hospitals, maternity homes, public baths, swimming pools, laundries, and disinfection institutions where all city citizens have the opportunity to receive treatment, fighting against the registration of more than the standard number of

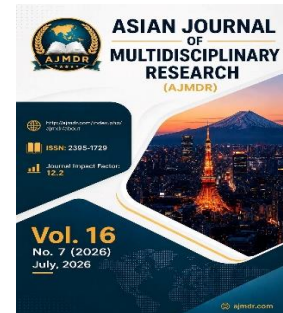


citizens in houses and apartments, establishing strict and accurate calculations regarding the number and composition of the city population, and establishing the collection of accurate information about the life of the city population at the required level;

10. Establishing constant meetings between citizens elected to city administrative institutions and voters, launching a system of reporting by leaders of city administrative institutions to the city population, constantly providing new information on various areas of city life to the city population, launching the publication of newspapers and magazines in cities, submitting issues considered in city dumas to the general public for discussion, and adopting decisions of the city дума and important issues by general voting;

In May 1917, based on the decisions of the Turkestan Committee of the Provisional Government, the instructions of the Ministry of Labor of the Provisional Government, and the "City Statute" published in the press of the Turkestan region on April 15, 1917, elections to the city дума and city administration were held in the city of Skobelev. The elections to the city дума, held for the first time in the Fergana region, were at the center of attention of all parties, including the Socialist Revolutionary Party. Party representatives followed the elections to the city дума with great attention and interest.

On June 14, 1917, a special party meeting was organized in the Skobelev branch of the Socialist Revolutionary Party on the issue of the Skobelev City Дума. At the party meeting, the issue of the attitude of the Turkestan Committee of the Provisional Government toward the Skobelev City Дума elected that year in May was discussed. In the discussion, party leaders and members took turns speaking and expressed their thoughts and observations. At the end of the meeting, the opinions were summarized and the following resolution was adopted. The resolution stated:



"It is necessary to determine whether the complaints submitted regarding the violation of election laws regarding the elections to the Skobelev City Duma are well-founded or unfounded."

The participants of the meeting proposed the following to the Fergana region commissar:

1. To demand that the Turkestan Committee of the Provisional Government provide all documents, applications, and complaints regarding the elections to the Skobelev City Duma to be reviewed in the city of Skobelev.

2. Since the Skobelev City Duma was approved by the Turkestan Committee as illegally elected and cannot operate, the Fergana region Commissar should not make a decision regarding the city duma until the complaints and applications regarding the elections held to the city duma are fully reviewed.

The decision of the party meeting was submitted to the Fergana region commissar on June 14.

As can be seen from the above information, the movements started for the establishment of city dumas and city administrations were always at the center of attention of all political societies and parties in the Turkestan region. All political forces tried to occupy more seats in the elections to the city dumas, which were new self-governing institutions, and to participate actively in the activities of the city dumas.

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